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Yamada

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(54) **MOTOR CONTROL APPARATUS**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**

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H02P 6/08	(2006.01)
H02P 6/16	(2006.01)
F16H 61/32	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC .. ***H02P 6/08*** (2013.01); ***H02P 6/16*** (2013.01); *F16H 2061/326* (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC H02P 25/08
USPC 318/701
See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

In a butting control, while performing a constant current control for a motor based on an output of a current sensor, the motor is driven by sequentially switching over a current supply phase of the motor in a one-phase current supply method, in which only one of the phases of the motor is powered. By performing the constant current control in the butting control, changes in a current value of each phase caused by temperature changes or aging changes is suppressed and hence a torque change of the motor is suppressed. In addition, by sequentially switching over the current supply phase of the motor in the one phase current supply method under the constant current control, a torque change of the motor can be suppressed while maintaining the current value of the current supply phase at a constant value.

8 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets

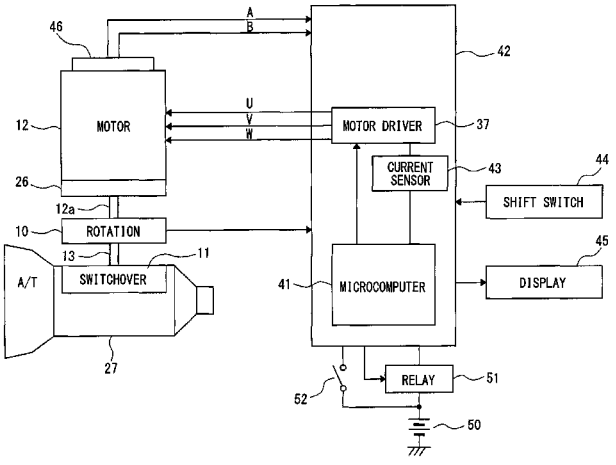

FIG. 1

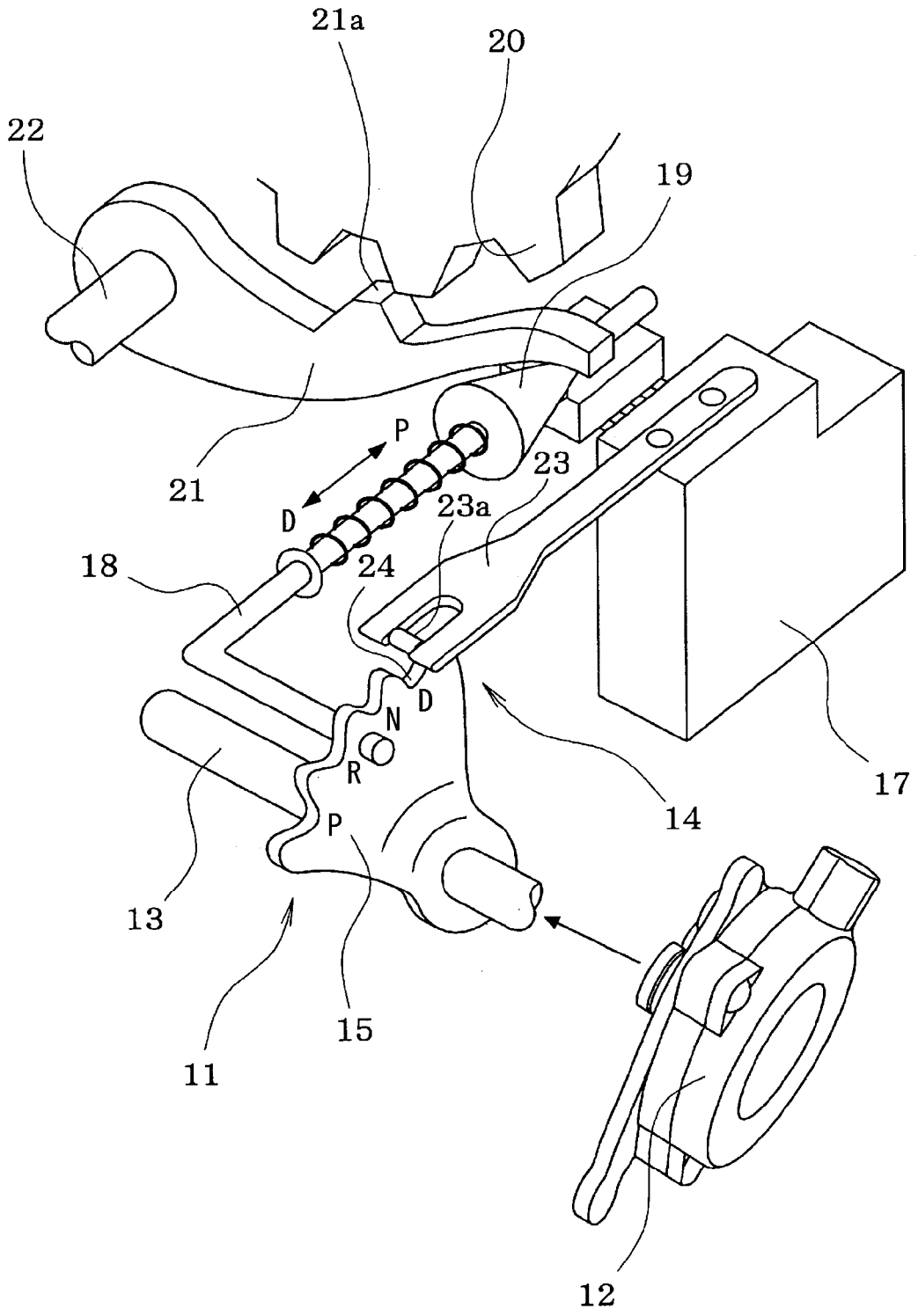

FIG. 2

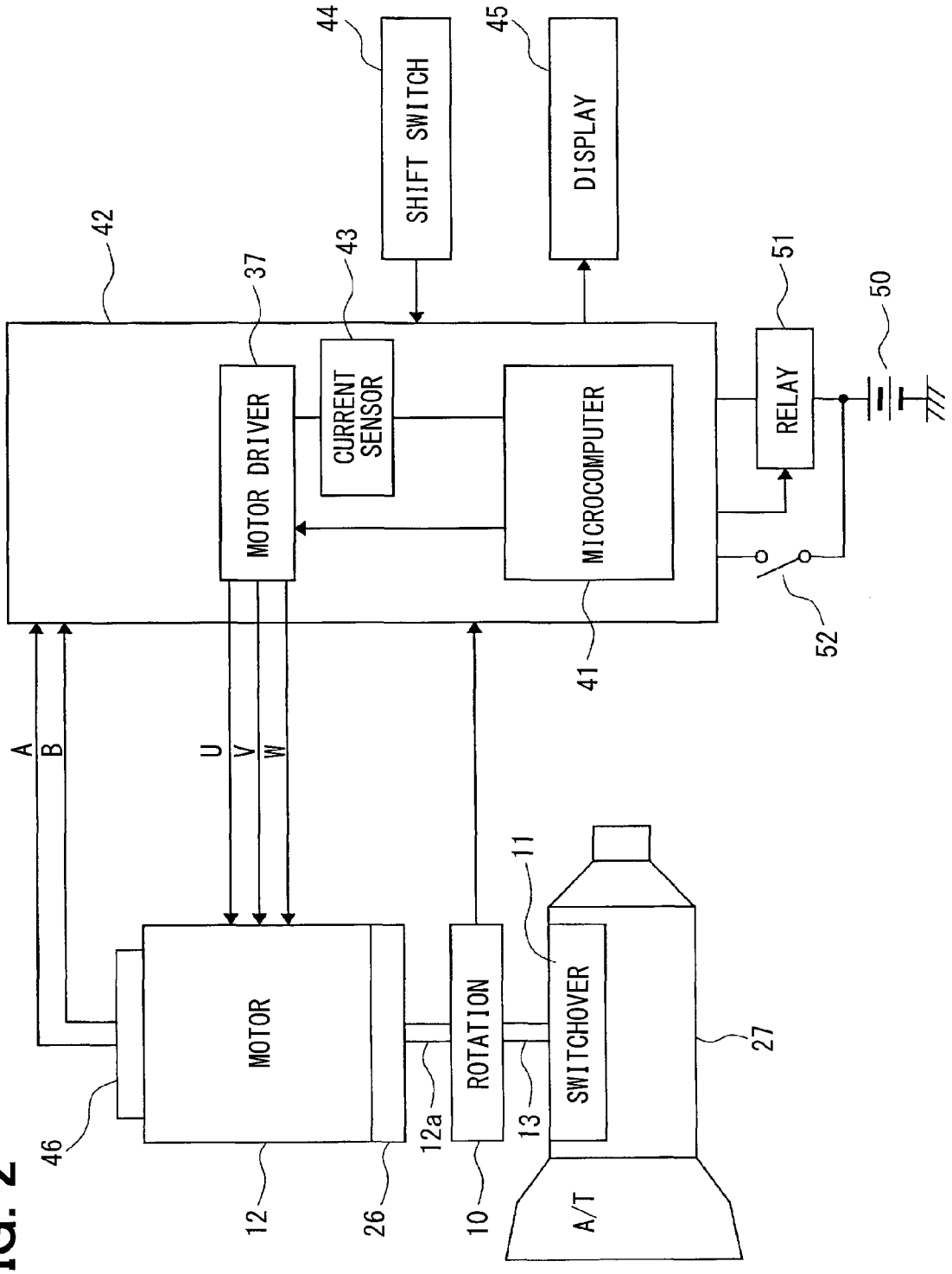
44
SHIFT SWITCH
45
DISPLAY
42
37
43
51
50
MOTOR DRIVER
CURRENT SENSOR
MICROCOMPUTER
RELAY
41
52
A
B
U
V
W
11
MOTOR
ROTATION
SWITCHOVER
27
46
12a
13
12
26
10
A/T

FIG. 3

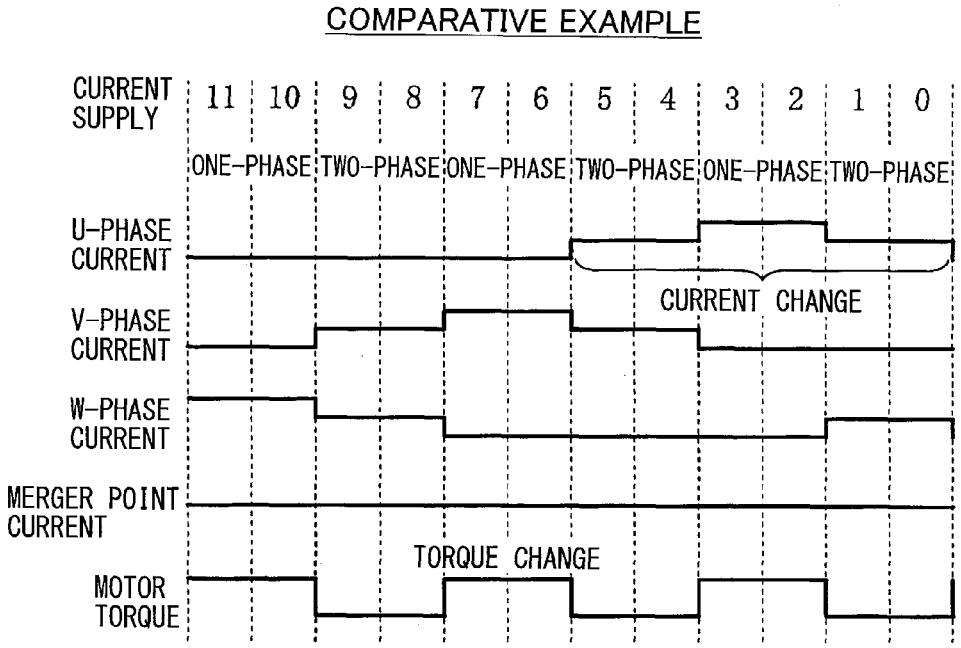

FIG. 4

ONE-TWO PHASE CURRENT SUPPLY

SEQUENCE OF CURRENT SUPPLY IN BUTTING CONTROL
(○: CURRENT SUPPLY PHASE)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
U-PHASE	○	○	○	○	○	○						
V-PHASE					○	○	○	○	○	○		
W-PHASE	○	○							○	○	○	○

ONE CYCLE

FIG. 5

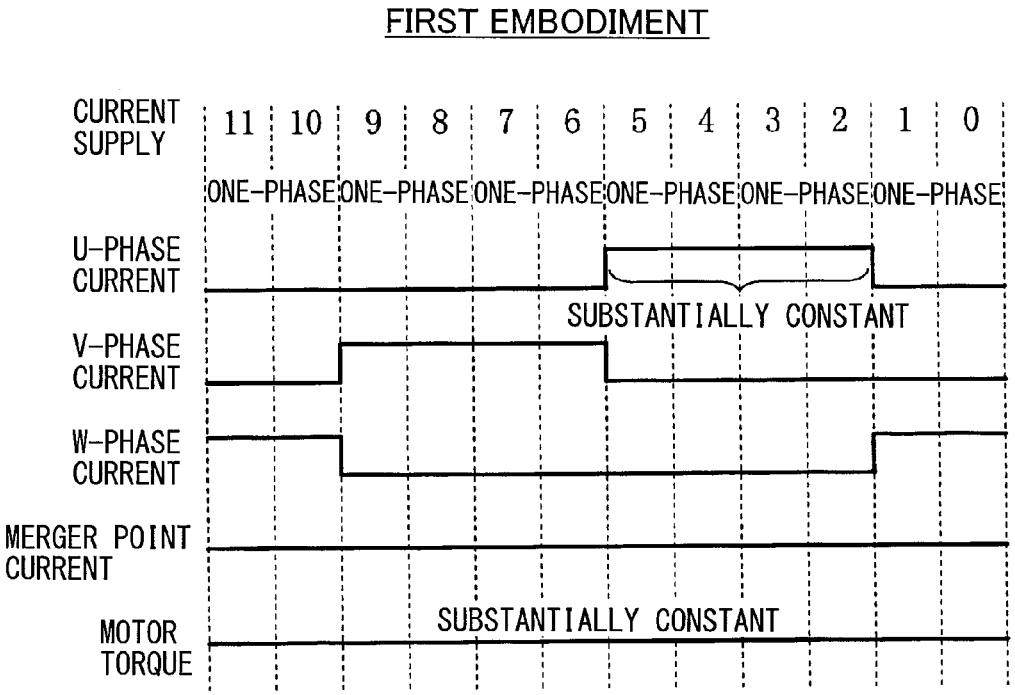

FIG. 6

ONE-PHASE CURRENT SUPPLY

SEQUENCE OF CURRENT SUPPLY IN BUTTING CONTROL
(○: CURRENT SUPPLY PHASE)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
U-PHASE			○	○	○	○						
V-PHASE							○	○	○	○		
W-PHASE	○	○									○	○

ONE CYCLE

FIG. 7

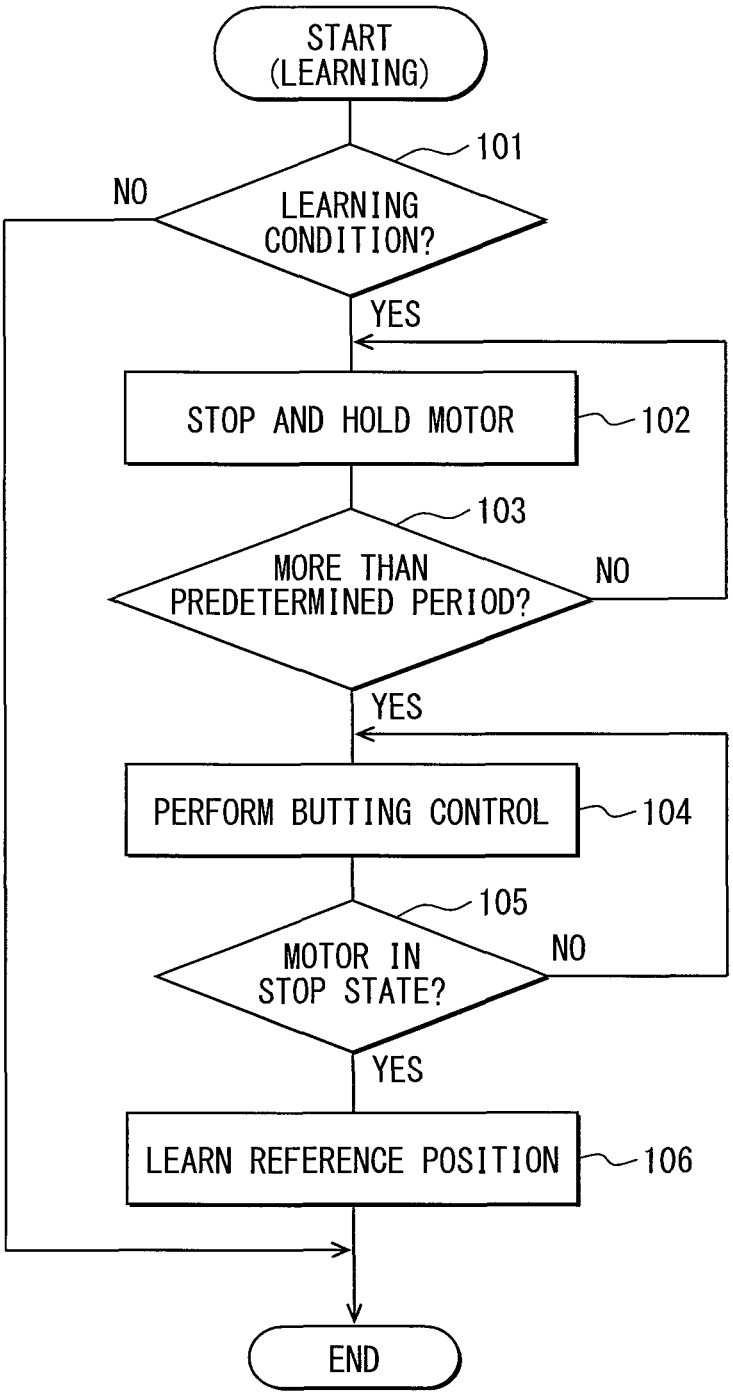
START
(LEARNING)
101
LEARNING
CONDITION?
NO
YES
STOP AND HOLD MOTOR
102
103
MORE THAN
PREDETERMINED PERIOD?
NO
YES
PERFORM BUTTING CONTROL
104
105
MOTOR IN
STOP STATE?
NO
YES
LEARN REFERENCE POSITION
106
END

FIG. 8

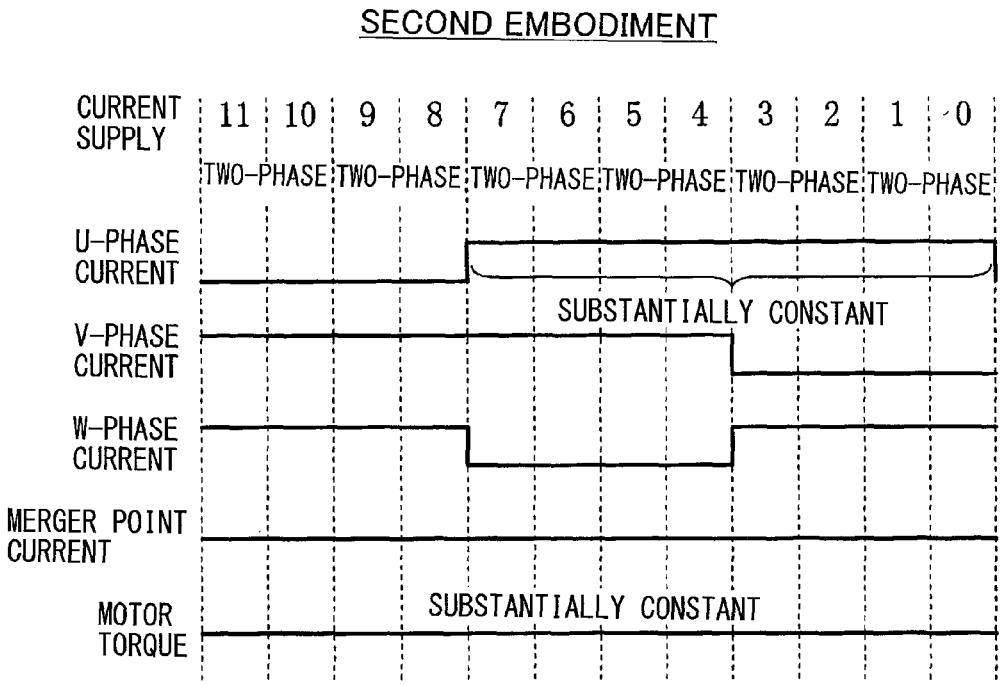

FIG. 9

TWO-PHASE CURRENT SUPPLY

SEQUENCE OF CURRENT SUPPLY IN BUTTING CONTROL
(○: CURRENT SUPPLY PHASE)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
U-PHASE	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○				
V-PHASE					○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
W-PHASE	○	○	○	○					○	○	○	○

ONE CYCLE

MOTOR CONTROL APPARATUS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is based on and incorporates herein by reference Japanese patent application No. 2012-251852 filed on Nov. 16, 2012.

FIELD

The present disclosure relates to a motor control apparatus, which learns a reference position by performing a butting control, in which a motor is driven to rotate until a control object butts against a limit position in a movable range of the control object.

BACKGROUND

It is a recent tendency in an automotive vehicle to change a mechanical drive system to an electric system driven by a motor for meeting demands for less space, improved manufacturing, improved controllability and the like. As one exemplary system, a shift range switchover mechanism for an automatic transmission system of a vehicle is driven by a motor. This system includes an encoder provided to output a pulse signal at every predetermined angular rotation in synchronism with the rotation of the motor. When a shift range is switched over, a shift range is switched over to a target range by rotating the motor to a target rotation position (target count value) corresponding to the target shift range based on a count value of the pulse signal of the encoder.

According to such a system, as disclosed in JP-A-2004-308752 for example, a butting control is performed. In the butting control, a motor (actuator) is rotated until a shift range switchover mechanism butts a limit position in a movable range (P-wall position or non-P-wall position) to learn the limit position as a reference position. A rotation amount (rotation angle) of the motor is controlled based on the learned reference position as a reference.

In a system, in which a current flowing in each phase of a motor is duty-controlled based on a duty ratio corresponding to a voltage in a butting control, a current value of each phase of the motor varies with coil resistance changes caused by temperature changes, aging changes or the like, even if the voltage is not changed. As a result, it is likely that a torque of the motor varies and precision of learning will be lowered.

One system, which is under study, includes a current sensor for detecting a sum of currents flowing in plural phases of a motor (for example, a current flowing to a junction point of phase coils) and performs a constant current control to control the sum of currents flowing in the phases of the motor to a constant value based on the output of the current sensor in performing the butting control so that a change in the current value of each phase due to temperature change and aging change is suppressed. According to a system, in which a current supply phase of a motor is switched over by a one-two phase current supply method (one-phase current supply and two-phase current supply are switched over alternately among phases of the motor) while performing the constant current control, the current value of the current supply phase changes at every switchover between the one-phase current supply operation and the two-phase current supply operation. This causes changes in the motor torque and hence lowers the precision in the reference position learning.

SUMMARY

It is therefore an object to provide a motor control apparatus, which is capable of controlling a torque of a motor at a generally constant value and improving precision of learning a reference position in performing a butting control.

According to one aspect, a motor control apparatus comprises a motor, a current sensor and a control unit including a reference position learning section. The motor has plural phases and drives a control object. The current sensor detects a current flowing to the motor. The reference position learning section learns a reference position by performing a butting control, which rotates the motor until the control object butts a limit position in a movable range of the control object. The reference position learning section drives the motor for rotation in the butting control by sequentially switching over a current supply phase of the motor in a current supply method. The number of the current supply phase of the motor is fixed. The reference position learning section performs a constant current control for controlling a sum of currents flowing in respective phases of the motor to a constant value based on an output of the current sensor in the butting control.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a schematic view of a shift range switchover apparatus according to a first embodiment;

FIG. **2** is a block diagram of a control system for the range switchover apparatus shown in FIG. **1**;

FIG. **3** is a time chart showing a current supply method of a motor according to a comparative example;

FIG. **4** is a diagram showing a current supply phase switchover pattern in a one-two phase current supply method;

FIG. **5** is a time chart showing a current supply method of a motor according to the first embodiment;

FIG. **6** is a diagram showing a current supply phase switchover pattern according to a one-phase current supply method;

FIG. **7** is a flowchart showing a reference position learning routine performed in the first embodiment;

FIG. **8** is a time chart showing a current supply control method for a motor according to a second embodiment; and

FIG. **9** is a diagram showing a current supply phase switchover pattern in a two-phase current supply method.

EMBODIMENT

A motor control apparatus will be described below with reference to plural embodiments, in which the motor control apparatus is implemented in a shift range switchover apparatus for an automatic transmission system.

First Embodiment

Referring to FIG. **1** and FIG. **2**, a shift range switchover mechanism **11** is a four-position range switchover mechanism, which switches over a shift range of an automatic transmission system **27** among a P-range (parking range), an R-range (reverse range), an N-range (neutral range) and a D-range (drive range). The range switchover mechanism **11** uses as its drive power source a motor **12**, which is for example a switched reluctance motor. Thus, the shift range switchover mechanism **11** is provided as a control object of the motor **12**. The motor **12** has a reduction mechanism **26** therein and has an output shaft sensor **10**, which detects a rotation position of its output shaft **12***a*. A manual shaft **13** is coupled to the output shaft **12***a* of the motor **12**. A detent lever **15** is fan-shaped and fixed to the manual shaft **13**.

A manual valve (not shown) is coupled to the detent lever **15** to move linearly in correspondence to rotation of the detent lever **15**. The manual valve is provided to switch over a

hydraulic pressure circuit (not shown) in the automatic transmission system **27** for switching over a shift range.

An L-shaped parking rod **18** is fixed to the detent lever **15**. A conical body **19** provided at a top end of the parking rod **18** contacts a lock lever **21**. The lock lever **21** moves up and down about an axis **22** in correspondence to a position of the conical body **19** to lock and unlock a parking gear **20**. The parking gear **20** is provided about the output shaft of the automatic transmission system **27**. When the parking gear **20** is locked by the lock lever **21**, drive wheels of a vehicle are held in a rotation-stop state (parking state).

A detent spring **23** is fixed to a support base **17** for holding the detent lever **15** in each of shift ranges P, R, N and D. The detent lever **15** is formed with range holding recesses **24** in correspondence to the ranges P, R, N and D. When an engagement member **23***a* provided at the top end of the detent spring **23** falls to fit in any one of the range holding recesses **24**, the detent lever **15** is held in the corresponding one of the shift ranges. The detent lever **15** and the detent spring **23** form a detent mechanism **14**, which engages and holds a rotation position of the detent lever **15** in the corresponding one of positions of the shift ranges, that is, holds the shift range switchover mechanism **11** in corresponding one of positions of the shift ranges.

In the P-range, the parking rod **18** is moved in a direction to approach the lock lever **21** so that the large-diameter part of the conical body **19** lifts the lock lever **21** to fit a protrusion **21***a* of the lock lever **21** in the parking gear **20** and lock the ring gear **20**. Thus the output shaft of the automatic transmission system **27** (drive wheels) is held in the locked state (parking state).

In the other ranges than the P-range, the parking rod **18** is moved in a direction leaving away from the lock lever **21**, the large-diameter part of the conical body **19** is pulled out of the lock lever **21** to lower the lock lever **21** and disengage the protrusion **21***a* of the lock lever **21** from the parking gear **20**. As a result, the output shaft of the automatic transmission system **27** is held in a rotatable state (travelable state).

The output shaft sensor **10** is formed as a rotation sensor (for example, a potentiometer), which outputs a voltage corresponding to a rotation angle of the output shaft **12***a* of the reduction mechanism **26** of the motor **12**. It is thus possible to confirm whether the actual shift range is the P-range, the R-range, the N-range or the D-range based on the output voltage. Even when the output shaft sensor **10** is not provided, an encoder **46** described later can confirm whether the actual shift range is either one of the P-range, the R-range, the N-range and the D-range.

As shown in FIG. **2**, the motor **12** is provided with the encoder **46**, which detects a rotation angle (rotation position) of a rotor of the motor **12**. The encoder **46** may be a magnetic rotary-type encoder. The encoder **46** is configured to output pulse signals of A-phase and B-phase to a shift range switchover control apparatus **42** (range switchover apparatus) in synchronism with rotation of a rotor of the motor **12** at every predetermined angular interval. The range switchover control apparatus **42** is provided with a microcomputer **41**, which counts both rising edges and falling edges of the A-phase signal and the B-phase signal outputted from the encoder **46**. Further the microcomputer **41** controls a motor driver **37**, which drives the motor **12** to rotate by switching over the power supply phase of the motor **12** in a predetermined sequence based on a count value (encoder count value). It is possible to provide two systems, each including three phase (U, V, W) coils of the motor **12** and the motor drivers **37**, so that, even when one system fails, the motor **12** is driven to rotate by the other system.

While the motor **12** is in rotation, the direction of rotation of the motor **12** is determined based on the order of generation of the A-phase signal and the B-phase signal. The encoder count value is counted up in a case of rotation in a normal direction (direction of rotation from P-range to D-range). The encoder count value is counted down in a case of rotation in a reverse direction (direction of rotation from D-range to P-range). Thus, even when the motor **12** is rotated in any one of the normal direction and the reverse direction, the relation of correspondence between the encoder count value and the rotation angle of the motor **12** is maintained. It is therefore possible to detect the rotation position of the motor **12** based on the encoder count value in any of the normal rotation and the reverse rotation and drive the motor **12** for rotation by supplying currents (electric power) to phase coils, which correspond to the detected rotation position.

The range switchover control apparatus **42** receives a signal indicating a shift lever operation position detected by a shift switch **44**. The microcomputer **41** of the range switchover control apparatus **42**, which is provided as a control unit, thus switches over a target range in response to the shift lever operation or the like of a driver, switches over the shift range by driving the motor **12** to rotate in correspondence to the target range, and displays the switched-over actual shift range on a display unit **45** provided in an instrument panel (not shown).

The range switchover control apparatus **42** is supplied with a power supply voltage from a battery **50** (power source) mounted on the vehicle through a power supply relay **51**. The power supply relay **51** is turned on and off by manually turning on and off an IG switch **52** (ignition switch) provided as a power supply switch. When the IG switch **52** is turned on, the power supply relay **51** is turned on to apply the power supply voltage to the range switchover control apparatus **42**. When the IG switch **52** is turned off, the power supply relay **51** is turned off to shut off power supply to the range switchover control apparatus **42**. Further, the range switchover control apparatus **42** is provided with a current sensor **43**, which detects a sum of currents flowing in plural phases of the motor **12** (for example, currents flowing to a junction or merger point at which phase coils are connected in common or currents supplied to the motor driver **37**).

The encoder count value is stored in a RAM (not shown) of the microcomputer **41** and hence the stored encoder count value is lost when the power supply to the range switchover control apparatus **42** is turned off. For this reason, the encoder count value available immediately after the power supply to the range switchover control apparatus **42** does not correspond to the actual rotation position (current supply phase) of the motor **12**. For switching over the current supply phase in accordance with the encoder count value, it is necessary to match the encoder count value and the current supply phase by matching the encoder count value and the actual rotation position of the motor **12** after the power supply is turned on.

The microcomputer **41** therefore learns the relation between the current supply phase of the motor **12** and the encoder count value by performing an initial driving after the current supply is turned on. In this initial driving, the current supply phase of the motor **12** is switched over one cycle in a predetermined time schedule in an open-loop control. Thus, the motor **12** is driven to rotate while matching the rotation position and the current supply phase of the motor **12** at either one of the current supply phases. The edges of the A-phase signal and the B-phase signal of the encoder **46** are counted. The relation of correspondence between the encoder count value and the rotation position of the motor **12** at the end of the initial driving is learned.

The microcomputer **41** can only detect the amount of rotation (rotation angle) of the motor **12** from the start position based on the encoder count value after the motor **12** is started. For this reason, the motor **12** cannot be driven to rotate to the target position accurately unless the absolute rotation position of the motor **12** is detected by some means after the power supply is turned on.

The microcomputer **41** therefore executes a reference position learning routine shown in FIG. **7** as described later. That is, after the initial driving is finished, the microcomputer **41** performs a butting control, by which the motor **12** is rotated until it butts a limit position in a movable range of the shift range switchover mechanism **11**. The microcomputer **41** learns the limit position as a reference position and controls the rotation amount (rotation angle) of the motor **12** based on the encoder count value of the reference position as a reference.

In this case, for example, a "P-range wall butting control" is performed so that the motor **12** is rotated until the engagement part **23***a* of the detent spring **23** comes to contact or hit the P-range wall (side wall of a P-range holding concave part **24**), which is the limit position on the P-range side of the movable range of the range switchover mechanism **11**. Thus, the limit position of the P-range side is learned as the reference position. Alternatively it is possible to perform a "D-range wall butting control" so that the motor **12** is rotated until the engagement part **23***a* of the detent spring **23** comes to contact of hit the D-range wall (side wall of a D-range holding concave part **24**), which is a limit position on the D-range side of the movable range of the range switchover mechanism **11**, and learn the limit position of the D-range side as the reference position.

It is noted here that, in a system, in which the current flowing in each phase of the motor **12** is duty-controlled based on a duty ratio corresponding to a voltage in performing the butting control, the current value of each phase of the motor **12** varies and the torque of the motor **12** varies due to changes in coil resistances caused by temperature changes or aging changes even when the voltage is unchanged. As a result, the precision of learning the reference position is likely to be lowered.

Therefore, a constant current control is performed to feedback-control a merger current of the motor **12** (a sum of phase currents flowing in respective phases) at a constant value based on the output of the current sensor **43** in performing the butting control. In one exemplary system shown in FIG. **3** as a comparative example, current supply phases of a motor are switched over by a one-two phase current supply method (FIG. **4**). In this method, a one-phase current supply mode and a two-phase current supply mode are switched over alternately among phases of the motor **12**, while performing the constant current control for controlling the merger point current of the motor **12** to the constant value based on the output of the current sensor **43**. Since the current value of the current supply phase changes at every switchover between the one-phase current supply mode and the two-phase current supply mode. This causes changes in the torque of the motor **12** and hence tends to lower the precision in the reference position learning.

For this reason, according to the first embodiment, as shown in FIG. **5**, the motor **12** is driven to rotate by sequentially switching over the current supply phase of the motor **12** by the one-phase current supply method (FIG. **6**), in which only one of the phases of the motor **12** is powered by the current supply, while performing the constant current control for controlling the merger point current of the motor **12** at the constant value based on the output of the current sensor **43**.

By performing the constant current control for controlling the merger point current of the motor **12** at the constant value in a feedback manner based on the output of the current sensor **43** in performing the butting control, changes in the current values of the phases caused by the temperature changes or the aging changes can be suppressed and hence the torque change of the motor **12** caused by the temperature changes or the aging changes can be suppressed. Further, by switching over the current supply phase sequentially by the one-phase current supply method while performing the constant current control, the current value of the current supply phase can be maintained at the constant value and the torque change in the motor **12** caused by the switchover of the current supply phase can be suppressed.

According to the first embodiment, the motor **12** is driven to rotate from its stop state in performing the butting control. For this reason, in starting the butting control, the motor **12** is maintained at the stop position by continuously supplying a current to a phase, which corresponds to the present rotational position of the motor **12**, for a predetermined time interval by the one-two phase current supply method (FIG. **4**).

The reference position learning according to the first embodiment described above, is performed according a reference position learning routine shown in FIG. **7** by the microcomputer **41** of the range switchover control apparatus **42**. Processing of this routine will be described below.

The reference position learning routine shown in FIG. **7** is repetitively executed at a predetermined interval during a period the power is supplied to the range switchover control apparatus and operates as a reference position learning section. When this routine is started, it is checked first at step **101** whether a predetermined learning execution condition is satisfied, for example, whether the initial driving has been completed or whether the reference position learning has not yet been completed. If it is determined that the learning execution condition is not satisfied, this routine is terminated without executing step **102** and its subsequent steps.

If it is determined at step **101** that the learning execution condition is satisfied, step **102** is executed and the motor **12** is held in the stop state by supplying the current to the phase corresponding to the present rotation position of the motor **12** in the one-two phase power supply method.

Then step **103** is executed and it is checked whether a predetermined period has elapsed from the start of current supply (that is, the current supply is continued for the predetermined period is supplied). If it is determined that the predetermined period has not yet elapsed, step **102** is executed again and the motor **12** is continuously held in the stop state,

If it is determined at step **103** that the predetermined period has elapsed from the start of current supply, step **104** is executed and the butting control (for example, P-range wall butting control or D-range wall butting control), in which the motor **12** is driven to rotate until the shift range switchover mechanism **11**, particularly the detent lever **15**, butts or contact the limit position in its the movable range. In this butting control, the motor **12** is driven to rotate by sequentially switching over the current supply phase in the one-phase current supply method while performing the constant current control, which controls the current at the merger point of the motor **12** at the constant value based on the output of the current sensor **43**.

Then step **105** is executed and it is checked whether the motor **12** stopped rotating. If it is determined that the motor **12** is rotating, step **104** is repeated to continue the butting control.

If it is determined at step **105** that the motor **12** stopped rotating, it is determined that the motor **12** has butted the limit

position in the movable range of the range switchover mechanism **11**. Step **106** is executed and the encoder count value (encoder count value corresponding to the limit position) at that time is learned (stored) as the reference position.

In the first embodiment described above, the constant current control is performed to control the merger point current of the motor **12** at the constant value based on the output of the current sensor **43** in the butting control. It is therefore possible to suppress variation in the current of each phase due to temperature change or aging change and to suppress variation in the torque of the motor **12** due to temperature changes or aging changes. Further, the current supply phase of the motor **12** is sequentially switched over in one-phase current supply method while performing the constant current control. It is therefore possible to maintain the current value flowing in the current supply phase at the constant value and to suppress torque change of the motor **12** caused by the switchover of the current supply phases. As a result, the torque of the motor **12** can be controlled at generally the constant value when performing the butting control and the precision of learning the reference position can be improved.

Still further, in the first embodiment, in starting the butting control, the motor **12** is held in the stop state by supplying current for the predetermined period to the phase corresponding to the present rotation position of the motor **12** in the one-two phase current supply method. It is thus possible to drive the motor **12** to rotate from the state that the motor **12** is completely stopped in performing the butting control. In addition, the one-two phase current supply method is capable of defining a pitch of a rotation position for holding the stop state to be smaller in comparison to the one-phase current supply method or two-phase current supply method. It is thus possible to maintain the motor **12** in the stop state at a position near the immediately preceding rotation position of the motor **12** by supplying the current to the phase corresponding to the present rotation position of the motor **12** in the one-two phase current supply method for the predetermined period.

Second Embodiment

A motor control apparatus according to a second embodiment will be described next with reference to FIG. **8** and FIG. **9**, in which only operations different from the first embodiment are shown.

According to the second embodiment, as shown in FIG. **8**, the motor **12** is driven to rotate by sequentially switching over the current supply phases of the motor **12** by only the two-phase current supply method (FIG. **9**), in which two of the phases of the motor **12** are powered by the current supply. This operation is performed with the constant current control for controlling the merger point current of the motor **12** at the constant value based on the output of the current sensor **43**. According to the second embodiment, substantially the same advantages will be provided as in the first embodiment.

In the first and the second embodiments described above, the motor **12** is driven to rotate by sequentially switching over the current supply phases of the motor **12** by the one-phase current supply method or the two-phase current supply method as the current supply method for maintaining the number of current supply phases of the motor **12** at a constant value (on or two) in performing the butting control. However, it is possible to drive the motor to rotate by sequentially switching over the current supply phases in a current supply method, in which three or more phases are supplied with current while maintaining the number of current supply phases of the motor in a system using a motor of four or more phases.

In the first and the second embodiments, a magnetic encoder is used as the encoder **46**. However, an optical encoder or brush-type encoder may be used. Further, the encoder **46** is not limited to an encoder, which outputs two phase signals (A-phase signal and B-phase signal). The encoder may output a Z-phase signal for correction (for indexing) in addition to the A-phase signal and the B-phase signal.

In the first and the second embodiments, a switched reluctance motor (SR motor) is used as the motor **12**. However, other types of brushless synchronous motor may be used as long as the brushless synchronous motor sequentially switches over the current supply phases of the motor by detecting the rotation position of the motor based on the count value of the output signal of the encoder.

In the first and the second embodiments, the motor drive apparatus is implemented exemplarily in the system having the shift range switchover mechanism, which switches over the shift ranges among four ranges that are the P-range, the R-range, the N-range and the D-range. However, it may be implemented in a shift range switchover mechanism, which switches over the shift ranges between two ranges of P-range and non-P-range. Alternatively, the motor control apparatus may be implemented in a system having a shift range switchover mechanism, which switches over the shift range among three ranges or five or more ranges.

Further, the motor control apparatus may be implemented in a shift range switchover mechanism, which switches over a shift range of a reduction mechanism of an electric vehicle.

In addition, the motor control apparatus may be implemented in other embodiments, such as various position switchover apparatus, which uses a brushless-type synchronous motor such as a SR motor as a drive power source.

What is claimed is:

1. A motor control apparatus comprising:

a motor having plural phases for driving a control object;

a current sensor for detecting a current flowing to the motor; and

a control unit including a reference position learning section for learning a reference position by performing a butting control, which rotates the motor until the control object butts a limit position in a movable range of the control object, wherein:

the reference position learning section drives the motor for rotation in the butting control by sequentially switching over a current supply phase of the motor in a current supply method, in which the number of the current supply phase of the motor, to which the current is supplied at same time, is fixed thereby to suppress torque change in the motor caused by switchover of the current supply phase so that the value of torque of the motor is controlled to a substantially constant value, while performing a constant current control for controlling a sum of currents flowing in respective phases of the motor to a constant value based on an output of the current sensor; and

the control object is a shift range switchover mechanism, which switches over shift ranges of an automatic transmission system.

2. The motor control apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein:

the motor has three phases; and

the number of the current supply phase, which is sequentially switched over in the butting control, is one or two.

3. The motor control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the motor has three phases; and

the reference position learning section holds, before starting the butting control, the motor in a stop state by supplying the current to a phase corresponding to a present rotation position of the motor for a predetermined period in a one-two phase current supply method, the one-two phase current supply method switching over the current supply phase between a one-phase current supply for supplying the current to one phase of the three phases and a two-phase current supply for supplying the current to two phases of the three phases.

4. A motor control apparatus comprising:

a motor having plural phases for driving a control object; and

a control unit, including processor, configured to:

detect a current flowing to the motor;

learn a reference position by performing a butting control, which rotates the motor until the control object butts a limit position in a movable range of the control object; and

drive the motor for rotation in the butting control by sequentially switching over a current supply phase of the motor, in which the number of the current supply phase of the motor, to which the current is supplied at same time, is fixed thereby to suppress torque change in the motor caused by switchover of the current supply phase so that the value of torque of the motor is controlled to a substantially constant value, while performing a constant current control for controlling a sum of currents flowing in respective phases of the motor to a constant value based on the detected current;

wherein the control object is a shift range switchover mechanism, which switches over shift ranges of an automatic transmission system.

5. The motor control apparatus according to claim 4, wherein:

the motor has three phases; and

the number of the current supply phase, which is sequentially switched over in the butting control, is one or two.

6. The motor control apparatus according to claim 4, wherein:

the motor has three phases; and

the control unit is further configured to hold, before starting the butting control, the motor in a stop state by supplying the current to a phase corresponding to a present rotation position of the motor for a predetermined period in a one-two phase current supply method, the one-two phase current supply method switching over the current supply phase between a one-phase current supply for supplying the current to one phase of the three phases and a two-phase current supply for supplying the current to two phases of the three phases.

7. The motor control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the reference position learning section performs the constant current control so that the current supplied to each phase is inversely proportional to the number of the current supply phase and the current supplied to the current supply phase at the same time is equal, and

the reference position learning section fixes the number of the current supply phase without switching over the current supply phase during a period of performing the constant current control.

8. The motor control apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the control unit is further configured to:

perform the constant current control so that the current supplied to each phase is inversely proportional to the number of the current supply phase and the current supplied to the current supply phase at the same time is equal, and

fix the number of the current supply phase without switching over the current supply phase during a period of performing the constant current control.

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